

The National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP) is a network of established and emerging rural institutions that work together to strengthen rural America. The principal members of the network are State Rural Development Councils in 40 of the 50 states.

Each of the State Councils, which are comprised of active members from a broad range of rural development-related organizations, is served by a full-time executive director. States differ in how they are organized and in the rural issues they decide to address.

This profile is one in a series highlighting the work of the State Councils.

For more information about the National Rural Development Partnership:

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**National Rural
Development
Partnership**

State Profile

Missouri Rural Opportunities Council (MoROC)



The Missouri Rural Opportunities Council (MoROC) was established in 1992 with the purpose of addressing Missouri's changing rural conditions, the diversity of its rural areas, the complexity of its needs, and the fragmentation of rural resources throughout the public and private sectors. By bringing together over six hundred problem-solver partner members who represent the heads of federal, state, and local governments as well as private sector for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, MoROC has built a network based on collaboration and consensus. MoROC reaches out to rural Missouri through the work of its eight committees: Agriculture and Natural Resource, Economic Development, Education, Health and Human Needs, Housing, Infrastructure, Leadership, and Telecommunications.

Currently MoROC is focusing on telecommunications, housing, and leadership projects. MoROC's goals are to continue: assessing rural Missouri's developmental needs; developing strategies, and facilitating actions for solution; identifying barriers which impede the solution of problems in rural

areas; assisting in establishing strategies for interagency cooperation to deal with the problems facing rural areas in a coordinated fashion; maximizing the accessibility of resources and programs to rural Missouri; and motivating rural communities and citizens to help themselves to stabilize, broaden, diversify, and invigorate their economic bases.

Contacting MoROC

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The driving force behind all of MoROC's initiatives is its 18-member Board of Directors and general membership, which brings together representatives from for-profit and non-profit organizations, local, state, and federal governments, including:

- ▼ Janie Dunning, U.S. Department of Agriculture/Rural Development
- ▼ Gary Cook, Small Business Administration
- ▼ Mark Mehmert, Missouri Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
- ▼ Carl Brown, Missouri Department of Natural Resources
- ▼ Randy Railsback, Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments
- ▼ Jim Hulse, AmerenUE
- ▼ Cheryl Zimny, Missouri Valley Human Resource Community Action Agency
- ▼ Jay Truitt, Missouri Cattlemen's Association
- ▼ John Bode, City of Shelby
- ▼ James K. Tice, SMSU Center for Scientific Research & Education
- ▼ Michael F. French, Missouri Area Health Education Centers/ Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine
- ▼ Dolph Woodman, Woodco, Inc.
- ▼ John Gulick, Missouri Department of Health/CHART
- ▼ Terry Hackney, Missouri Department of Economic Development/REAP
- ▼ George Nickolaus, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension



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NRDP State Profile

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Missouri Rural Opportunities Council at Work

Telehealth Program

MoROC identified the need for better physician access for rural Missourians, particularly for those in need of specialists or recipients of Medicare or Medicaid. As a result, the Telecommunications, Health and Human Needs, and Education Working Committees of MoROC determined that a telemedicine demonstration project would expand health care education and delivery opportunities throughout the state. MoROC brought together decision makers to collaborate on a telemedicine grant proposal which resulted in the Missouri Telehealth Network (MTN). Now in its 6th year of operation, the MTN operates in 17 locations around Rural Missouri.

"The MHP partnership has opened the doors of communication and programming opportunities in so many ways."

**Marsha Alexander,
University Extension**

Focus on Housing

The MoROC Housing Committee formed the Missouri Housing Partners (MHP) to help give rural citizens information on home loans. MHP is comprised of federal and state agencies and lenders who work with individuals seeking financing options to buy or rehabilitate a home. The process gives individuals access to loan information via an application form sent to the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC). Since its inception in 1997, over 900 individuals have requested information and been contacted by one or more of the 10 partnering agencies. The number of individual requests has been steadily increasing each year.

Leadership Issues

MoROC's leadership committee has published and distributed several pieces of helpful information designed to maximize the accessibility of resources and programs to rural Missouri.

Before You Call Cards

To help facilitate fund calls, the leadership committee of MoROC contacted a variety of funders and developed a list of 13 questions that a caller should be prepared to answer

before making a phone call requesting funding. These questions were printed on a card the size of a regular business card. Over 7,000 of the cards have been distributed in the last year.

Organization

Assessment Forms

The MoROC leadership committee published the Organization Assessment

Form – A Guide for Rural Missouri Leaders used by MoROC and other organizations to evaluate their effectiveness and to highlight potential problem areas. The MoROC board used this guide to help develop next year's strategic plan.

Ethics Cards

The Ethics Cards are a service of the Leadership Committee. The small laminated cards hold helpful tips used to assist ethical decision making. The "guiding principals for ethical decisions" and "questions to ask to make ethical, informed decisions" are printed on one side. "Questions to ask to become an informed public official" are on the other side. The card also identifies three situations for which the questions are needed.